

Certification Task Force meeting July 30, 2007
Indiana State Library

In attendance: Andrew Rowden (director Scott Co. PL), Jenny Draper (director Kendallville PL), Joni Brookins (Warsaw PL), Terry Rheinheimer (director Middlebury Comm. PL), Carolyn Strickland (Lake Co. PL), Colette McNeely (Ohio Twp. PL), Margaret Hamilton (director Greenwood PL), Tamsie Meurer (director Charlestown-Clark Co. PL), Sue Waibel (director Remington-Carpenter Twp. PL), Marian Corya (Carmel Clay PL), Nancy Newport (Carmel Clay PL), Becki Whitaker (INCOLSA), Brenda Williams (director Princeton PL), Larry Oathout (director Tell City-Perry Co. PL), Jason Hatton (Bartholomew Co. PL), Mike Williams (Indianapolis-Marion Co. PL), Liz Schoettle (Johnson Co. PL), Ann Alexander (Johnson Co. PL), Linda Judd (Indiana State Library), Kathie Scott (director Pulaski Co. PL), Jamie Hicks (interpreter for Kathie Scott), Renee Reed (Butler University), Edie Huffman (Indiana State Library), Jake Speer (Indiana State Library), Roberta Brooker (director, Indiana State Library)

Roberta Brooker began the meeting by discussing the current political climate, including the Commission on Local Government Reform, which will examine and make recommendations on reforming and restructuring local government. She also discussed another commission, which will examine the setting of levies as well as the property tax issue. She mentioned that she had gotten very little feedback as a result of state library postings regarding these issues. Discussion ensued regarding different aspects of consolidating services, systems, etc. Roberta stated that people would be kept informed via library listservs. She also stated that the library community needed to put together a plan or plans to submit to the commissions, in order that the voices of librarians and library supporters be heard.

Jake then spoke about the initial plan for the certification task force, that it was a body which would make recommendations to the state library. Edie presented the spreadsheets detailing various professional licenses in Indiana, none of which are tied to population size or project cost, just education attained. Many of these licenses are accepted in other states, because the licensee takes a national certifying examination.

Teacher certification was mentioned, and Edie said she would send out the information, so that task force members could see what is required for teacher certification. She mentioned that the Indiana Library Federation's recommendation is that ALA-MLS librarians be paid the same as teachers with master's degrees in their community school.

She then presented the comparison of some state librarian certification programs, which had been distributed to the task force members. Discussion then commenced regarding certification. One suggestion is that all ALA-MLS staff be required to be certified and that they have to amass a certain amount of continuing education in a certain number of years, which was seconded. It was also suggested that there be 40 required CEUs (one work week) every 3 years and that the employing institution ought to support the certification of its staff, including continuing education, by paying for conferences, etc.. It was mentioned that finding money in the budget can be difficult, especially if the budget has been set some time before. 2% of the budget for continuing education was suggested.

A recommendation was made that all ALA-MLS staff be certified,

Questions which need to be answered include:

1. What to do
2. What's the cost
3. Length of certification
4. # of continuing education units (CEUs)
5. Details
6. Who would be certified provider

All directors have basically the same responsibilities regardless of the size of the library, so perhaps they need to be treated the same as teachers, who have to have the same education regardless of the size school in which they teach. "We have to have professionals in all of these libraries if we're going to provide quality service that the people deserve. If I live in Huntington do I deserve

less quality of professional service than if I live in Fort Wayne? No. I'm paying taxes just like people in the bigger libraries. And I think we've all been satisfied to sit back and hope no one noticed us and bothered us. Those days are gone. Schools have been forced to make changes they didn't want to make and our schools survived."

"I think the day's come when Indiana has to provide public library service to everyone in this state. Knowing that to maintain that level we can't have a library system in every town with a four way stop just like we can no longer maintain a school system in every township." Funding would have to change, and there could still be a library building as before, just not a separate library system.

The question would be what staff member has to have the ALA-MLS; director, branch head? Are we talking about consolidation? What is the smallest unit of viable service? In school consolidation, schools were apparently allowed to decide whether to consolidate, and if they chose not to, were told they would have to make do with the money they had from their small service area. Lots of discussion about consolidation, size of new libraries, etc.

In Illinois, libraries are part of a regional system, through which they get some services.

Discussion about licenses in Indiana which enable a holder to become employed in that profession. No license, no job. It should be easier to sue a license holder than one without. Should librarian certification be the same? Discussion ensued regarding pay for job, whether certified or not.

Goals should be:

1. Quality of service
2. State recognition of profession, which lends validity
3. Continuing education to upgrade skills (libraries are life long learning centers)

Discussion regarding Wisconsin's certification model, which is very good, INCOLSA's courses good model, WebJunction viable provider, ALA-APA coursework. There are many continuing education providers already.

"Are we talking about certifying only directors?" Law requires that the following be certified: directors, branch managers, department heads, professional assistants. Definition of professional assistant needs to be clarified. Current definition is "position in which a person devotes more than half of his or her time to work that calls for a knowledge of books and other library materials and technical library processes and two, the ability to deal

with people in a professional capacity as distinguished from clerical". Suggestion made that job titles not be listed in law, since there is so much variation. Duties would make more sense. Discussion ensued regarding published requirements and previous formula for # of staff to be certified, which was no longer enforced due to many libraries not being able to meet standards, if it was enforced. Discussion about architects not being licensed at particular \$ level of project. Discussion of cost of hiring certified staff.

Librarians have skill sets and education, like teachers and doctors. The size of the community should not determine education for professionals. If we don't improve standards, someone else will. Directors of small libraries do all the jobs, so they really need more education.

Boards must be educated regarding value of education, continuing education, pay commensurate with education and duties. The public must be educated as to librarian credentials, would improve recognition of professionals. Again, issue of ability of small communities to pay, should not settle for lower quality of service. The library community should speak with one voice.

The simpler the system, the better

Leverage of library losing state and federal funds if director is not certified. Amount of money needs to be meaningful. Changing law to help by saying that only libraries with certified directors can get public funding (which I think was formerly in the law -EH). The state will probably tell us what to do, we may have no choice, only input. Suggestion that funding be found to help directors who are not correctly certified currently become so.

Question about how many directors would not meet standards depending on education? EH will send out that information

Distinction certification and licensing

Some attendees liked 5 certification levels. Edie stated that 30 years ago there were 4 levels: Head librarian, department head, branch head and professional assistant.

Majority of attendees (16 voted yes) recommended that all directors have ALA-MLS; population size not important. This would have a major impact on small libraries and might force consolidation. Lots of discussion about consolidation.

Suggestion that there be two levels: director (ALA-MLS) (grandfathering in anyone not currently at that level?) and library assistants (no MLS); factor in years of experience, CEUs, and prescribed courses.

Consensus of the group is A, library directors must have an ALA-MLS, B, there should be three tiers, not by population but by education, matching certification and education with duties for full time staff.

1. Tier 1 - ALA-MLS
2. Tier 2 - Bachelor's degree or non ALA-MLS
3. Tier 3 - Associate's degree

Suggestion to continue using current levels of certification for directors, slightly change for nondirectors.

There should be a standard regarding # of years to achieve certification

Clerical and page staff would not be required to be certified